

## **Federal GEAR UP Program Names Cunningham Advocacy Award Recipient**

GEAR UP, also known as the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, is a program federally funded by the US Department of Education. Its objective is to encourage middle and high school students to stay in school, study hard and take the courses necessary to prepare them for college. Kentucky's GEAR Up program is administered by the Council on Postsecondary Education.

"Because we share a common mission to make higher education more accessible to Kentuckians, I am certainly honored to be named a GEAR UP Advocate of the Year," Cunningham said. "I share this recognition with the dedicated staff of KHEAA and The Student Loan People who give their best, day in and day out, to provide top-quality higher education programs and services to Kentuckians."

KHEAA has supported GEAR UP since the first grant was awarded to Kentucky in 2000. As part of the state GEAR UP partnership, KHEAA provides free financial aid information and college planning materials, as well as the services of KHEAA's College Info Road Show, a mobile college planning classroom, and regional outreach counselors to guide and encourage students to pursue a college education. KHEAA has also awarded \$1.5 million in additional scholarships to students participating in Kentucky's GEAR UP program.

"For many years, we have reinvested our revenues into programs that promote higher education opportunities for Kentuckians," Cunningham said. "Our partnership with GEAR UP is one of which we are very proud and hope to continue in the years to come."